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You  
and  
Your  
Job!



Foreign Agricultural Service  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

November 15, 1955

Dear Coworker:

You and I are members of a fine organization, the Foreign Agricultural Service. In many ways, our FAS is like a business corporation. It has a board of directors to whom it must report annually -- the Congress. And it has a group of stockholders who look to it for top-notch performance -- the American public.

OUR STOCK IS ONLY AS HIGH AS THE CONFIDENCE EACH GROUP HAS IN US.

Such confidence comes only as we earn it. We can earn it, first, through performance and, second, through favorable relationships.

In the following pages we have set down some ideas that, if carried out by all of us, will help keep our stock high. I would like you to read these pages carefully, discuss these ideas with co-workers, and put them into practice as our FAS Public Relations Program.

*Gwynn Garnett*  
Gwynn Garnett  
Administrator

# *Our employee platform*

Favorable internal relationships are the foundation on which an organization must build its performance and public relationships. The positive spirit of an active organization is infectious. It spreads quickly when employees know they're trusted and appreciated.

Loyalty and efficient performance may be expected only to the degree that employees are made fully aware of organization goals, are recognized as full-fledged members of the team pushing toward those goals, and are given the equipment they need to move ahead.

People like to know where they're headed. Every employee needs to know that his or her job is helping the organization get somewhere.

Employees must know what's happening. This is especially important in an organization like FAS that handles complex subject matter. Broad knowledge of goals, programs, and current developments is, for us, a principal working tool.

Sometimes we're inclined to think that FAS has two different kinds of employees--those here in Washington and the agricultural attachés in the field. Since integration of the attaché program with FAS, however, we have become one group. The only basic difference is one of physical distance from the home office. The need of each group for leadership and information is identical.

The "why" of a job must be thoroughly understood by the person doing it. FAS must continuously define and explain its programs and goals, and every leader in FAS must share this information continuously with those working under his or her supervision.

## *FAS and the public*

- The public judges us both by the job we do and by the way that we do it.

Our principal contacts with the public have to do with supplying information on world agricultural and marketing situations. The service we give is judged in three principal ways:

*Is it useful?* More than ever before in history, our "clients"--the people of American agriculture--need answers to their many complex questions. Many of these questions relate to foreign agriculture. FAS needs to provide answers that are timely and concise.

Historical or philosophical treatises, no matter how scholarly...or rambling accounts, no matter how exhaustive...or exotic reports, no matter how fascinating...these are not what our clients are requesting.

Our clients require timely, factual information that will help them do a specific job. That job may involve production...or marketing...or finance ...or policy...or programs. In preparing information we must con-

tinually put ourselves in the place of the person on the receiving end and ask ourselves, "Is it useful?"

*Is it prompt?* When a person requests our services, he does it because he needs our help. The quicker we can help him, the more valuable our assistance will be. By meeting his need promptly, we're dealing with him while he's in the most receptive mood. It pays to be prompt!

*Is it pleasing?* It's not only what you do, but the way you do it.... An attractive publication, the friendly tone of a letter, a warm voice over the telephone, courteous treatment given an office caller--these brighten up our service duties and give a personal touch that makes people remember us long after they may have forgotten why they came to us in the first place.

## You and FAS

*Keeping up to date* with goals, programs, and current developments is a job requiring everyone to keep on his toes--the office, to share information that it has; you, to learn all you can.

*What you need to do.* Every employee needs to show initiative in keeping up with events related to his own work so that he can do a better job and

thereby further both the work of the office and his own career. Facilities readily available to all include FAS administrative announcements, FAS and other USDA publications, USDA Library references, trade journals and other publications received by FAS, speeches by FAS personnel, FAS press releases, etc. Each employee should analyze his own need for such sources and make appropriate access arrangements.

**What FAS needs to do.** FAS, as an organization, needs to make certain that programs and policy objectives are clearly and continuously passed along to all employees. There is always a tendency for an organization to become compartmentalized; the way to avoid it is through continuous, expedited information exchange.

Some specific suggestions:

**Hold staff meetings.** The Administrator's weekly staff meetings need to be matched by regular meetings at lower organizational levels. Every Division Director is expected to meet regularly with his staff.

**Have an "open-door" policy.** Supervisors need to be readily accessible to those working with them. Every employee should be made to feel that the door of his immediate boss is always open. In advance, however, he should organize

the presentation of his problem so as to take up a minimum of time.

*Share information.* Many FAS employees have at their fingertips various kinds of information not widely known but nevertheless useful to other employees. Each employee should feel it his responsibility to keep such coworkers actively in mind and take the initiative in sharing information with them.

*Keep things moving.* "Bottle-necks" are always unpopular, whether they are personal or organizational. FAS must insist that employees expedite the movement of materials to the next person, and at the same time maintain adequate distribution facilities (including distribution to attaches in the field).

## *Doing our job*

FAS has no "public relations office" because the entire organization is considered to be in the service of the public. This means that every employee is, in effect, a public relations officer. This fact gives special meaning to someone's wise observation that favorable relationships with the

public depend on "how you handle not only the big matters but the many trivial situations that arise constantly."

**Usefulness.** The objective of FAS is to serve American agriculture and the general public, and to provide the information they need on world agricultural situations in the form they can use. Most of this information is made available in published form, which necessitates certain criteria in the FAS publication program:

**Timeliness.** The public looks to FAS for answers to pressing questions. Our public information must be current information, of immediate usefulness. The planning, writing, and printing of publications must be carried out in conformance with the overall programs and objectives. They must fit in with a definite schedule, in order to budget the time of FAS editors who put the material into final shape. Otherwise, valuable time and effort will be wasted. This means that every proposed printed publication to be put out by FAS must be discussed with the FAS Publications Committee while in early planning stage.

**Reliability.** There is no substitute for reliability.

The reporting of certain economic facts at certain times can be embarrassing--but the best long-range policy is to let the chips fall where they may and to report the facts as they are found.

*Readability.* We are writing nowadays for "busy readers." Our writing style, of necessity, must be simple. It is harder to write "simple English" but well worth the extra effort in terms of public acceptance.

*Appropriate outlet.* A number of outlets, or combinations of outlets, are available to us. The most effective ones, singly or in combination, must be used. Available outlets include *Foreign Agriculture*, *Foreign Crops and Markets*, *Circulars*, *Foreign Agricultural Trade Digest*, *Foreign Agricultural Trade Statistical Report*, *Foreign Agriculture Reports*, *Statistical Bulletins*, and *Agriculture Information Bulletins*. They also include press releases, radio and television releases and appearances, public speeches, meetings with agricultural and trade groups, and USDA newsletters to farm magazine and rural radio editors, land-grant colleges, etc. They also

include special releases to trade journals, farm organizations, trade organizations, and others interested in our work.

**Promptness.** We must give the public prompt service, not only because of the timeliness of much of our information but also because of the opportunity to win friends. Every supervisor must make sure that inquiries addressed to his office are handled, or at least acknowledged, promptly. A letter now, even though incomplete, may be worth much more to an inquirer than a perfect letter a month from now. Rapid handling of requests for publications, including mailing list actions, are essential. And in addition, each of us needs to try to look ahead and anticipate the public's requirements. In many instances we can see a situation taking shape and make advance preparations to give the service we think will be needed.

**Attractiveness.** Periodically, the FAS should review the surface impressions that it is making on the public and take steps to improve its "attractiveness." The review should include:

Appearance of publications.

Telephone manners.

Correspondence style.

Methods of greeting and assisting visitors.

Appearance of offices.



